

JOHN LEWIS
5th District, Georgia

SENIOR CHIEF DEPUTY
DEMOCRATIC WHIP

COMMITTEE ON
WAYS AND MEANS

CHAIRMAN
OVERSIGHT SUBCOMMITTEE

JOINT COMMITTEE
ON TAXATION



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Dear Community,

I have always believed our most-sacred obligation is to give our young people access to an excellent education. Atlanta's schools have been through many challenging times. However, over the last five years, our students and teachers have made tremendous progress. That progress hasn't come easy. Progress is hard. It requires persistence, and sacrifice, and courage. All of these are qualities exhibited by our teachers, our principals, and by our current Superintendent, Dr. Meria Carstarphen.

She and her team have worked tirelessly to ensure that ALL our students have access to quality schools. Now, their work is beginning to bear fruit. Working hand in hand with our principals, teachers, students and staff, the school district has a record high graduation rate, students are scoring higher on their SATs and ACTs, and more students are graduating ready for college or to start their careers.

We have come a long way, but still have a long way to go. Attached is a letter I sent directly to the Board of Education last week and now, I'm asking you to sign this petition to urge the board to extend Dr. Carstarphen's contract. We have come too far to turn back now.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Lewis".
John Lewis
Member of Congress



JOHN LEWIS

Dear Honorable Atlanta Public Schools Board of Education,

To all the teachers, to all the parents and to all the beautiful, smart and gifted young people of our public school system, I wish you all a happy new school year!

I am writing to express my congratulations on the progress that the Atlanta Public Schools has made for our students during the past five years. Nothing is more important than educating our children. I strongly believe that no matter a person's income or zip code, access to an excellent education should be a right.

I was almost moved to tears seeing all the hard working, committed and dedicated men and women at the district's Back To School Bash serving our families. I learned more about the brave and bold work they are doing to increase the graduation rate, especially for African-American children, and improve test scores for all our Atlanta students. This will give our children who need it the most the opportunities in life that they need and deserve.

This progress is due to the vision, hard work and community collaboration from Superintendent Meria Carstarphen, her leadership team, all of those on the front lines, and the members of the Board of Education.

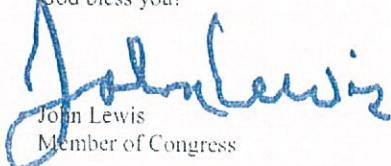
Our community was deeply challenged during the cheating scandal. But we are pulling ourselves up and now have a chance to meet the challenge. You have the opportunity to send a message to help address the long standing inequities for black and brown children especially the poorest ones. Stay the course. Don't give up!

I urge you to continue on your path with our great superintendent, Meria Carstarphen, and extend progress. It is imperative that every student be college bound and career ready. We must be persistent and consistent if we are to build the beloved community here in Atlanta. Young people are our nation's future, and we must allow them every chance to succeed. It is time to get in good trouble, necessary trouble, with our good superintendent!

Hang in there! Never give up, never give in, never give out. Keep the faith and keep your eyes on the prize!

Be bold. Be courageous.

God bless you!


John Lewis
Member of Congress

Cc: Superintendent Meria Carstarphen

We proudly stand with Congressman Lewis in recognizing the progress made by Atlanta Public Schools and in fully supporting continued leadership by Superintendent Dr. Meria Carstarphen

Sylvia Russell, President AT&T Georgia (Ret.); Westside Future Fund Board Member; Hollis Innovation Academy GO Team Member; Learn4 Life Leadership Council

Julius Hollis, CEO, Hollis and Co.; Author "In the Arena- The High-Flying Life of Atlanta Air Founder Michael Hollis"

Hon. Shirley Franklin, 58th Mayor, City of Atlanta

Billy Linville, Partner, Lexicon Strategies

Hon. Roy Barnes, 80th Governor, State of Georgia

Hon. Jason Carter, Partner, Bondurant Mixson & Elmore LLP

Amb. Andrew Young, Former Congressman; 14th United States Ambassador to the United Nations; 55th Mayor, City of Atlanta

Ingrid Saunders Jones, National Council of Negro Women (Immediate Past Chair); The Coca-Cola Company (Ret.)

Beverly Daniel Tatum, President Emerita, Spelman College; Westside Future Fund Board Member (Chair-Elect); Hollis Innovation Academy GO Team Member; Achieve Atlanta Board Member

Rabbi. Peter Berg, Senior Rabbi, The Temple

Hon. Matt Westmoreland, Post-2 At-Large, Atlanta City Council

Hon. Courtney D. English, Immediate Past Chairman, Atlanta Board of Education

Dr. Sidney E. Harris, Professor and Dean Emeritus, J. Mack Robinson, College of Business at Georgia State

Rudy M. Beserra, Senior Vice President for Latin Affairs, The Coca Cola Company (Ret.)

Chris Sizemore, Co-founder and CEO, Creative Mischief

James Bailey, President and CEO, Russell Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Comer Yates, Executive Director, Atlanta Speech School

Daniel Pedersen, Senior Advisor, Atlanta Speech School; Founding President (Ret.), Buffett Early Childhood Fund.

Robyn Ellis Kranz, Founding Partner, Brownieland Pictures

Mariela Romero, Regional Community Empowerment Director, Univision Communications

Egbert Perry, Chairman and CEO, Integral

Colin Kelly, Atlanta Managing Partner of Shook Hardy & Bacon LLP

Hon. Andre Dickens, Post-3 At-Large, Atlanta City Council